

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY (INCLUDING FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CODES, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, SHERIFF & COMMUNICATIONS)

DATE: NOVEMBER 24, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS VANNESS
O'CONNOR
GIRARD
THOMAS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
BELDEN
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

BUD YORK, SHERIFF
SHANE ROSS, CHIEF DEPUTY
BRIAN LAFLURE, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES/FIRE COORDINATOR
AMY MANNEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
KAREN PUTNEY, ADMINISTRATOR OF FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS: GERAGHTY
PITKIN
STRAINER
TAYLOR
MICHAEL GATES, CAPTAIN OF CORRECTION FACILITY
SCOTT CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY
SUE PICARD, FRIENDS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. VanNess called the meeting of the Public safety Committee to order at 9:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of the Public Safety Committee, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bud York, Sheriff, who advised of the 2010 grant funding obtained through the efforts of Shane Ross, Chief Deputy, which totaled \$97,434 and included Buckle Up New York, the Motorcycle Safety Initiative, Child Passenger Safety and Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention. He noted that these were guaranteed funds for 2010.

Regarding the New World maintenance contract, Sheriff York apprised that the contract renewal was currently under review with Paul Dusek, County Attorney, and it would be brought before the Finance Committee.

Sheriff York informed that a check had been received from General Motors Acceptance Corporation in the amount of \$3,540 which was placed in an Insurance Recovery Account to be used to repair

the damages to a light pole caused by a motor vehicles at the Correction Facility.

Sheriff York presented a request for permission for Steven Stockdale to attend the Drug Unit Commander Academy Training in Quantico, Virginia, from December 1 to December 10, 2009, with the use of a County Vehicle. He stated that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) would pay for mileage. Sheriff York noted that the nomination of Sergeant Stockdale to attend the conference was commendable and there would be no cost to the County for this training.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request for out of state travel as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 18, 2009 Board meeting. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.*

As a result of the resignation of a Correction Officer, Sheriff York presented a request to fill the vacant position of Correction Officer, base salary of \$32,400, Employee No. 10725.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Correction Officer as outlined above, and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

In recognition of Mr. O'Connors' years of service to the citizens of Warren County, Sheriff York extended his sincere appreciation for the honest and dedicated service given by Mr. O'Connor to the Sheriff and Communications Committee, and to Warren County at-large. Sheriff York presented an inscribed coffee mug to Mr. O'Connor as a token of gratitude, which was followed by applause in recognition of his service to Warren County.

This concluded the Sheriff & Communications portion of the meeting and privilege of the floor was extended to Karen Putney, Administrator of Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement, who distributed copies of the agenda, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Pertaining to pending items, Mrs. Putney stated that the pending item which addressed the research to be carried out by Patricia Nenninger, Second Assistant County Attorney, relative to the implementation of a fine system regarding expiring permits, would remain pending.

Acknowledging another referral with regard to writing a letter to the State Legislators regarding septic issues, Mrs. Putney requested that it be removed from the list. She explained that the language in the Department of Health Laws had not been changed to include the words "engineered plans", as originally anticipated; therefore, she said, the referral could be removed. Mrs. Putney stated that all of the Towns had designed septic systems and some Towns required engineered (stamped) plans. She stated that it was acceptable for the Towns for which the County had jurisdiction, to design septic systems in accordance with the 75A appendix for a residential system; however, she noted, alternate systems required engineered system plans.

It was the consent of the Committee to approve the request to remove the referral as outlined above from the list of pending items.

The next item presented by Mrs. Putney was the Monthly Activity Report, a copy of which was included in the agenda. Mrs. Putney summarized the report and noted that revenue and the number of permits issued had increased since June of 2009.

A discussion ensued.

Relative to New Business, Mrs. Putney stated that the code enforcement responsibility would remain with the County. She said that in order to transfer responsibility, it would be necessary to adopt a local law and hire an official within established guidelines. She further stated that the official must complete course work and proceed to enforce the codes in the same manner that the Town currently used. There was no support, she said, for the Town to take back the responsibility of code enforcement and a plan had always been required prior to the issuance of any permit. The hardship, she stated, was the need for her Department to use the time that had been set aside for fire safety inspections, in order to conduct the necessary plan reviews for permits and there were only three staff members and an excess of required paperwork to be completed in a limited amount of time.

Furthermore, Mrs. Putney asserted that complaints were often received as a result of the number of State mandates regarding the process. The responsibility of her Office, she said, was to verify code compliance and she asserted that her Office had not set the rules. She apprised that she must continually defend the work of her Office and she would be happy to provide data which substantiated the duties and requirements therein.

Mr. VanNess thanked Mrs. Putney for her sustained efforts and he stated that the Supervisors supported the Department. Mr. Taylor noted the necessity of the Department as codes must be enforced.

Mr. Geraghty underscored the need for effective customer service which included the manner in which customer complaints were handled. He suggested advancing the effort to make requirements and processes clear to the customers in order to avoid the need for their return visits. He also called for the need to remain judicious when reacting to complaints from Contractors. He commended Mrs. Putney for the efforts and hard work put forth by her Department. Mrs. Putney stated that the core complaint from the public was that service was not carried out in a timely manner. Mr. Thomas pointed out the complexity of the process which he felt was over-regulated. Mrs. Putney stated that New York State mandates must be enforced. Mr. VanNess asked who should be addressed relative to the alleviation of such mandates and Mrs. Putney said that she would bring more information to the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Pitkin asked the processing times for plan reviews for the surrounding area and Mrs. Putney reported that it was six to nine weeks for Saratoga County and two weeks for the Towns of Queensbury and South Glens Falls, as well as Washington County. She stated that Warren County informed applicants of a two-week processing time, and made a concerted effort to complete

applications in less than two weeks. In an effort to maintain optimal lead times, Mrs. Putney stated that her staff took shorter lunch periods and reported to work earlier than their required shift to that end. The margin of error, she noted, would typically increase relative to the volume of applications.

Mr. Pitkin suggested that the two-week turnaround time for Zoning Compliance Certificates be posted and Mrs. Putney noted that the information could be added to the flier.

Mr. Monroe pointed out that when State codes came into effect, Towns had the option to opt out of code enforcement which would move such responsibility to the County. He further stated that if the County opted out, the responsibility would then shift to the State which would not be in the best interest of the taxpayers.

This concluded the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement portion of the meeting and privilege of the floor was extended to Brain LaFlure, Director of the Office of Emergency Services/Fire Coordinator and Amy Manney, Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Services, who distributed copies of the agenda, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mr. LaFlure thanked Mr. O'Connor for his years of dedicated service to the Committee and the County.

Regarding the effort to locate a storage facility for the Hazard Materials (HAZMAT) vehicle and trailer, Mr. LaFlure stated that the search had progressed to areas outside of the Municipal Center. Mr. LaFlure apprised that a meeting was held recently relative to identifying a common storage facility which included agencies that worked with the Office of Emergency Services on a regular basis. He stated that he would present viable, cost effective alternative(s) at the next Committee meeting. Mr. O'Connor suggested ad placement for same and Mr. LaFlure informed that real estate agents had assisted with the search.

In reference to the appointment of a Hazard Mitigation Coordinator, Mr. LaFlure reported that he required more time in order to gather additional information and to hold discussions with outside agencies regarding same.

A discussion ensued with regard to the necessity of the position of a Hazard Mitigation Coordinator and Mr. LaFlure asserted that the Mitigation Plan was a perpetually changing document which required steady vigilance and dedication.

Mr. VanNess asked Scott Campbell, Executive Director of Friends of the North Country, about research and information gathering efforts relative to a Hazard Mitigation Plan, for which outreach would also include the Highway Superintendent.

Mr. Campbell apprised that summer interns had carried out a full outreach effort which included phone calls and emails. He said they had done a thorough job, and there were only a few questions and referrals in which the interns were unable to respond to adequately. Overall, he said, the effort

resulted in a very good draft Plan. Regarding refining and revising the Plan, Mr. Campbell stated that it was the Supervisors who held the knowledge regarding the needs of their communities and therefore protocol was to contact the Supervisors from the respective highway departments.

Regarding the qualifications for the Hazard Mitigation Coordinator, Mr. LaFlure reiterated the necessity of the position due to the fact that the Mitigation Plan was a living document versus a one-time project. Mr. VanNess noted that in past discussions some members felt that the position should be filled by an engineer and Mr. Thomas pointed out that the Department of Public Works (DPW) staff included engineers. Mr. Campbell apprised that Planning Departments also had the necessary knowledge for a Hazard Mitigation Coordinator. Responding to Mr. Pitkin, Mr. Campbell stated that the DPW was most likely functioning in this manner; however, he said, not in the broadest scope possible. Mr. LaFlure added that communication with Department Heads was also essential. Mr. Geraghty stated that hazard mitigation was currently being carried out and perhaps the issue was out of proportion. Mr. VanNess reiterated that Mr. LaFlure and Ms. Manney had requested a point person for same, which would include the processing of grant applications.

Mr. Girard recommended that a joint meeting be held between the Public Safety Committee and the Public Works Committee. Mr. VanNess suggested that he, Chairman Monroe and Mr. Belden meet to discuss and resolve the issue.

Mr. Campbell thanked the Committee and stated that necessary revisions would need to be made in order to conceive an acceptable Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mr. LaFlure stated there was not a set term limit for the Deputy Fire Coordinator and he requested that Pending Item 3B be removed from the list.

Mr. LaFlure presented a request to apply for a grant which would support the local emergency interoperability and terrorism preparedness effort, sponsored by the New York State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) in the amount of \$131,972, with an application deadline of November 30, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request to apply for the SHSP grant as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 18, 2009 Board meeting. *A copy of the Request to Apply for a Grant Application and Grant Agreement is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaFlure presented a request to transfer funds from Fire Prevention & Control - Supplies, to Fire Prevention & Control - Equipment, in the amount of \$265, for the purchase of a pallet jack to move supplies received from the State related to the H1N1 pandemic.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined above, and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaFlure presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenue and appropriations to reflect State Homeland Security Program funds (SHSP) received in 2009, in the amount of \$176,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2010 County Budget as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee (*Note: Subsequent to the meeting it was determined that a request to amend the 2010 Budget would be resubmitted in 2010*).

The next item was a request for Mr. LaFlure to attend the Regional Fire Administrators Conference in Montour Falls, NY, from December 3 to December 4, 2009. He stated that transportation would be provided by the Essex County Fire Coordinator.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request for travel as outlined above. A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.

Relative to potential revenue, Mr. LaFlure raised the possibility of imposing a fee for report investigations provided by the OES. He noted that most Counties that provided the service charged a fee for same and this was a potential untapped revenue source for Warren County. He stated that he would conduct research relative to the matter and report back to the Committee.

Pertaining to the Emergency Services Training Center, Mr. LaFlure stated that it was still in progress and he was currently awaiting additional information.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Girard, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist